



## **International Day of Working Women**

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We publish the message sent by Monsignor Francisco Gil Hellín, archbishop of Burgos, on the occasion of the International Day of Working Women, 8 March.

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A woman driving a bus, directing a factory or sending a division is today completely normal. Let us not say anything about the common fact to all the countries of the first world that there are women who practice medicine, architecture, engineering, teaching at all levels and any of the thousand and one specializations of the technique. Certainly, since time immemorial the woman has ground the wheat and prepared the batch of each day, has shared agricultural and livestock tasks and, above all, has devoted many hours to the human, spiritual and religious education of their children. Not forgetting that in many civilizations has led domestic household administration, supplying with their talent, ingenuity, and dedication the most primary shortcomings.

However, the fact to which it alluded at the beginning is linked to the industrialized society. The International Day of Working Women is even more modern. Its origin dates back to 1857 when in New York there was a march of women workers from a

textile factory in protest against the working conditions. Another important fact that conditioned the ephemeris occurred in 1908 also in New York when a group of industrial seamstresses of large factories declared themselves on strike to protest their working conditions and demanded an increase in salary, reduction in the working hours and end of child labor. During this peaceful strike, one hundred and twenty-nine women were burned in a fire at the cotton textile factory. This happened on March 8th of that year.

The following year was held for the first time in the United States on the day of the working woman and in 1910 it was proposed that day as International Women's Day, in the International Congress of Socialist Women of Denmark. On March 8, 1977, the United Nations declared the "International Day of Working Women" and chose the lilac color to represent the efforts of the women who died.

Since then the situation of women has advanced very significantly. But there are still many things to be done to make society recognize its dignity. In the pages of a newspaper, a burglars journalist wrote recently in pain these words: «It is the third business that more pasta moves in the world.»

Ahead are only drug trafficking and weapons, both despicable but somewhat less repugnant than the trafficking of people-almost always, women-who takes the gold medal of indecency. She was referring to the terrible and sultry business of selling women for prostitution.

It's a significant case but not the only one. I think, for example, in the human drama that is being created with the massive phenomenon of immigration in Europe: many women are forced to come in search of a little welfare for their children, at the cost of leaving them in the country of origin, so many times in extremely precarious situations.

The Christian faith professes that God has created man and woman with the same personal dignity and with the same rights since both made them in their image and assigned them to the same inheritance of Heaven. Jesus Christ, for his part, dignified so much to the woman, so despised in that society, that the first witness of the transcendental fact of his resurrection was a woman: Mary Magdalene. Another woman, the Virgin Mary, was elevated to the unparalleled dignity of his

mother.

My reflection for this day could be summarized as well. Man and women are equal in dignity. And in that which are distinguished as complementary.

I wish with all my soul that women should be socially recognized in their full dignity. And I desire, with the same force, to be recognized in their specificity and their femininity, and that the male is not the point of comparison but the personal dignity that she is a carrier by the will of the Creator.